General Assembly

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Agenda item 64 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/63/430/Add.2)*]

63/170. Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/127 of 16 December 1977 and its subsequent resolutions concerning regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/51 of 9 March 1993[1] and its subsequent resolutions in this regard, and Human Rights Council resolution 6/20 of 28 September 2007,[2]

Bearing in mind the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[3] which reiterates, inter alia, the need to consider the possibility of establishing regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights where they do not already exist,

Recalling that the World Conference recommended that more resources should be made available for the strengthening of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights under the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Reaffirming that regional arrangements play an important role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments,

Welcoming the fact that the Office of the High Commissioner has been systematically pursuing a regional and subregional approach through a variety of complementary means and methods, in order to maximize the impact of the

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1993/23 and Corr.2, 4 and 5), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/63/53), chap. I, sect. A.

[3] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

activities of the United Nations at the national level, and that the Office intends to establish new regional offices,

1. *Welcomes* the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights;

2. *Also welcomes*, in that respect, the close cooperation of the Office of the High Commissioner in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the field of human rights, high-level governmental expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions;

3. *Recognizes*, therefore, that progress in promoting and protecting all human rights depends primarily on efforts made at the national and local levels, and that the regional approach should imply intensive cooperation and coordination with all partners involved, while bearing in mind the importance of international cooperation;

4. *Welcomes* the growing exchanges between the United Nations and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, on the one hand, and regional organizations and institutions, such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Council of Europe, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the League of Arab States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other regional institutions, on the other;

5. *Also welcomes* the placement by the Office of the High Commissioner of regional representatives in subregions and in regional commissions;

6. *Further welcomes* the progress achieved in the establishment of regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, and, in this regard, notes with interest:

(*a*) The increasing cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and African organizations and suborganizations, in particular the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community;

(*b*) The support provided by the Office of the High Commissioner to the African Union for the strengthening of the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa, and welcomes in this regard the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights;

(*c*) The convening of the fourteenth annual Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 10 to 12 July 2007, which, inter alia, included a discussion on future challenges for the Regional Framework for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region and adopted a comprehensive set of points for follow-up action entitled the "Bali Action Points";[4]

(*d*) The ongoing consultations among Governments aimed at the possible establishment of regional human rights arrangements held in the context of the

[4] A/HRC/7/35, annex.

Regional Framework, with the support and advice of national human rights institutions and civil society organizations of the Asia-Pacific region,

(*e*) The recent decision by the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to develop a mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights,

(*f*) Activities undertaken within the framework of the regional project of the Office of the High Commissioner for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Latin American and Caribbean region and the strengthening of the cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Organization of American States;

(*g*) Ongoing initiatives to further develop arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights by the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR);

(*h*) Activities undertaken within the framework of cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and the League of Arab States;

(*i*) The continued cooperation towards the realization of universal standards between the Office of the High Commissioner and regional organizations in Europe and Central Asia, namely, the Council of Europe, and its various human rights bodies and mechanisms, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in particular for activities at the country level;

7. *Invites* States in areas in which regional arrangements in the field of human rights do not yet exist to consider, with the support and advice of national human rights institutions and civil society organizations, concluding agreements with a view to establishing, within their respective regions, suitable regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations dealing with human rights and to make available adequate resources from within the regular budget of technical cooperation to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner to promote regional arrangements;

9. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting countries of the various regions, at their request, under the programme of technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations, and in this regard welcomes the decision of the Office to strengthen national protection systems in accordance with action 2 of the reform programme of the Secretary-General;[5]

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, formulating concrete proposals and recommendations on ways and means to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of human rights, and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of the present resolution;

11. *Decides* to consider the question further at its sixty-fifth session.

70th plenary meeting
18 December 2008

[5] See A/57/387 and Corr.1.